the world; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BALLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The ASSOCHAM has represented to the Government to remove constraints which emanate from problems of infrastructure particularly in ports, airports, availability of railway wagons and roads. They have also requested the Government, inter-alia to make the SAFTA an effective forum, establish parity of Rupee and Dollar, establish better relations with ASEAN countries, improve product-mix for export, promote Indian Brand Equity, set up Warehousing facilities abroad, combat non-tariff barriers and establish quality management.

(c) and (d) The Government facilities efforts to explore new market and products. A number of markets were explored for specific exports during the last year which include South Africa Botswana, Swaziland, Argentina, Brazil and Israel. The border trade with Myemmar, is also being promoted. The medium term export strategy being formulated by the Ministry will include efforts to widen our presence by expanding exports to cover new markets which are important globally.

Import alRBD Pafmoline through STC

2200. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has recently decided to import the RBD Palmoline on F.O.B. through STC instead of C&F and whether any representation has been received in this regard; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that that Government had suffered a loss of huge quantity of foreign exchange by importing the oil on C&F basis and intermediaries has made huge profits by importing thi soil through STC on C&F basis; and

(c) by when the import of this oil FOB is to start; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAMIAH): (a) to (c) STC is the canalising agency for import of RBD almoline or supply under Public Distribution System as per the connected policy of the Govt. in the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs In terms of the existing policy, while all import contracts are to be finalised on FOB basis; STC has been importing edible oil for PDS for a number of years of CIF (Cost Insurance Freight) terms after obtaining necessary exemption from the Ministry of Surface Transport as CIF imports are more convenient and economical.

An individual representation has been received, in which a plea has been made to effect import of food items on FOB basis.

Since the year 1990-91, STC has, however, been incurring losses in its edible oil operations for PDS mainly due to the devaluation of the Rupee and the actual landed cost of the imported palmoline being higher than the Central Issue Price charged from the States. The Govt. has been recouping the deficit in Edible Oil Account by providing financial assistance to STC from time to time.

As a matter of policy for the import of edible oils, STC deals directly on principal to principal basis without intermediaries.

Shifting of items from social import licence list to OGL, lists

2201. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:
SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently